

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE **A16**NEW YORK TIMES
18 June 1985

Officials Say Payments of \$328,000 in 6 Years Motivated Whitworth

By **STEPHEN ENGELBERG**

Special to The New York Times

SAN FRANCISCO, June 17 — A Federal grand jury charged today that Jerry A. Whitworth, a retired Navy enlisted man, was paid more than \$328,000 over six years to sell secrets to the Soviet Union.

The grand jury, in a one-count indictment handed down here, provided new details about what the authorities say is one of the most extensive spy rings in American history.

John A. Walker Jr., of Norfolk, Va., another retired Navy enlisted man, has already been charged with espionage in the case, as has his brother, a retired Naval officer, and son, a sailor.

Joseph P. Russoniello, the United States Attorney here, alleged that Mr. Whitworth, 45 years old, sold documents to the Soviet Union through Mr. Walker and that the payments provided one of the major reasons.

'Not Just a Salve'

"The money payments were not just a salve," he said. "They appear to be compensation for services rendered."

Mr. Russoniello said the investigation of the case was continuing to determine whether others were involved. He would not say whether there would be any further arrests.

The indictment paints a picture of the two friends holding secret meetings, using code words in their letters and photographing documents with miniature cameras.

At the time the authorities say the two were spying for the Soviet Union, Mr. Whitworth was serving as a senior enlisted man in a variety of sensitive Navy communication posts.

Mr. Walker ran several businesses in Virginia and was a part-time private investigator before he opened his own detective agency.

The indictment describes a pattern of contacts between Mr. Walker, his close friend Mr. Whitworth and a man identified only as a "Soviet contact."

On July 7, 1978, for example, Mr. Whitworth received \$24,000 from Mr. Walker in San Diego. Eight days later, the grand jury charges, Mr. Walker met his "Soviet contact" in Vienna.

Meetings Around the World

The indictment said that Mr. Walker's meetings with the Russians took place in Vienna, Hong Kong and the Philippines.

The grand jury said Mr. Whitworth received payments from Mr. Walker on 15 separate occasions, beginning in 1976 and continuing through 1982.

The first of these was \$4,000, and later payments in 1976, 1977 and 1978 were as high as \$24,000, the indictment said.

The pattern apparently changed in 1980. Months earlier Mr. Whitworth notified the Navy that he intended to retire. According to the indictment, in June 1980 Mr. Whitworth received a payment of \$100,000 and on June 9, he told the Navy he would remain in the service.

In 1981, he was paid \$50,000 in one meeting and in 1982 received \$80,000 from Mr. Walker, the grand jury charged.

Mr. Russoniello said Mr. Whitworth has not cooperated with the authorities. The United States Attorney said the evidence of the payments was "circumstantial."

When Mr. Whitworth was arrested, he was unemployed and living in a trailer park in Davis, Calif. Mr. Russoniello would not say whether prosecutors had been able to determine what had happened to the money purportedly paid Mr. Whitworth.

Safe-Deposit Boxes Cited

The indictment did note that in February 1980 Mr. Whitworth paid \$11,310 for a van. It also said that conspiracy between the two men involved "storage of currency in safe-deposit boxes."

The F.B.I. has said that in a search of Mr. Whitworth's house, agents found evidence he had owned four safe-deposit boxes over a period of years. Three were in the San Francisco area, the other in Sacramento.

His attorney, Louis Hiken, says Mr. Whitworth owns no safe-deposit boxes.

Military experts have said Mr. Whitworth had access to secret information on the Pacific fleet, such as ship movements and codes, that would enhance and complement the data on the Atlantic Fleet available to others charged in the espionage case.

The other three men arrested — Mr. Walker, his brother Arthur and son, Michael — served mainly in Atlantic Fleet commands.

Access to Information

Mr. Whitworth joined the Naval Reserve in 1956, when he was 17 years old. He began active duty in 1962, after several years at a community college in Coalinga, Calif., and rose to the rank of senior chief petty officer, one of the most responsible positions open to an enlisted man. He had access to secret information in a variety of positions ashore and at sea.

Mr. Whitworth was twice stationed at the Naval Communications Center in Diego Garcia. From 1979 to 1982, he was stationed at the Naval Telecommunications Center, the Alameda, Calif., Naval Air Station and the aircraft carriers Enterprise and Constellation.

At the Alameda Naval Air Station, one of the largest Navy bases in the country, Mr. Whitworth was a custodian of classified materials and was one of those entrusted with communication security.

On several occasions, the authorities say, John Walker flew from his home in Norfolk, Va., to foreign ports where Mr. Whitworth's Navy ship had docked. Mr. Walker collected documents from Mr. Whitworth and then immediately passed them to a Soviet agent, the F.B.I. said in court papers.

The F.B.I. contends that in 1984, Mr. Whitworth anonymously tried to turn in the spy ring in exchange for complete immunity from prosecution. He apparently changed his mind.